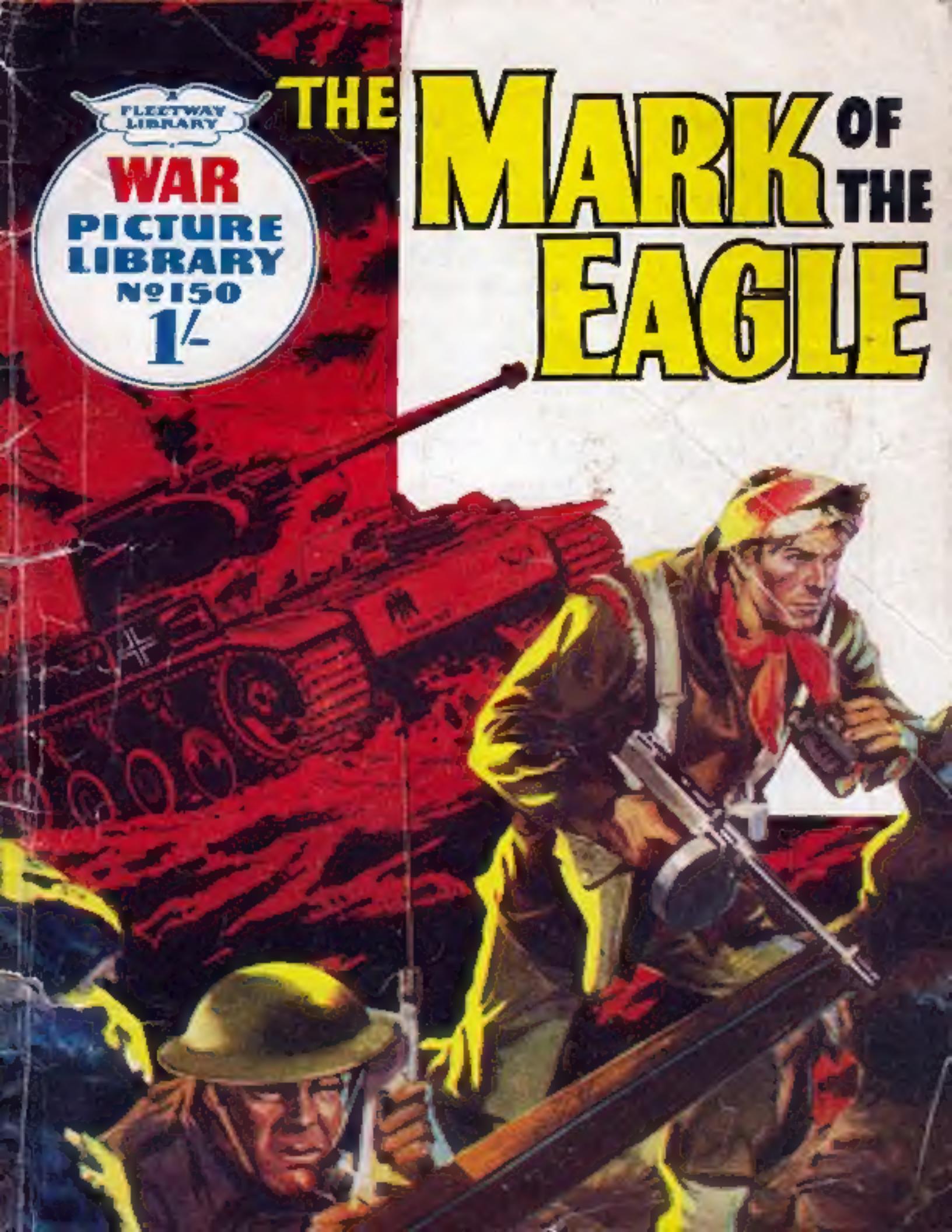


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THE

MARK OF THE EAGLE



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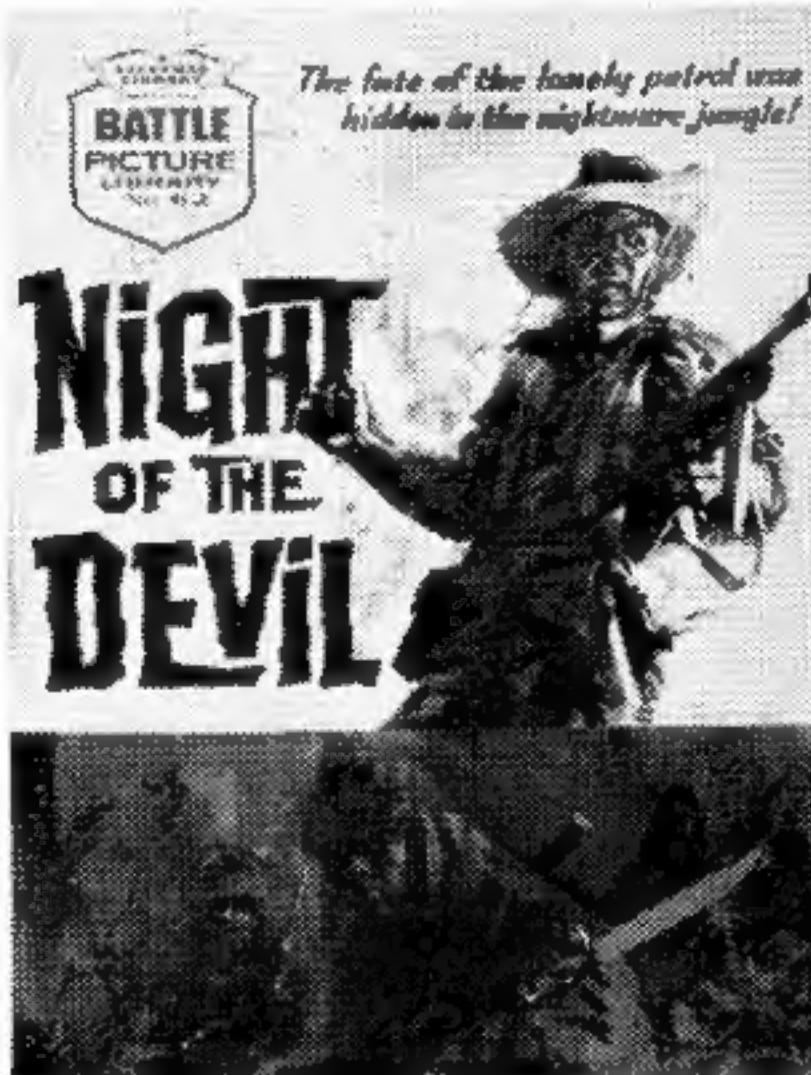
- ★ No. 61 **DEATH TRAP**
Like a monstrous god of war, Hill 60 demanded a sacrifice!
- ★ No. 62 **NIGHT OF THE DEVIL**
The fate of the lonely patrol was hidden in the nightmare jungle!
- ★ No. 63 **CHALLENGE**
The war was too far away for these red-blooded men of action!
- ★ No. 64 **THE VICIOUS CIRCLE**
Clawed from the sky, they would not admit defeat!

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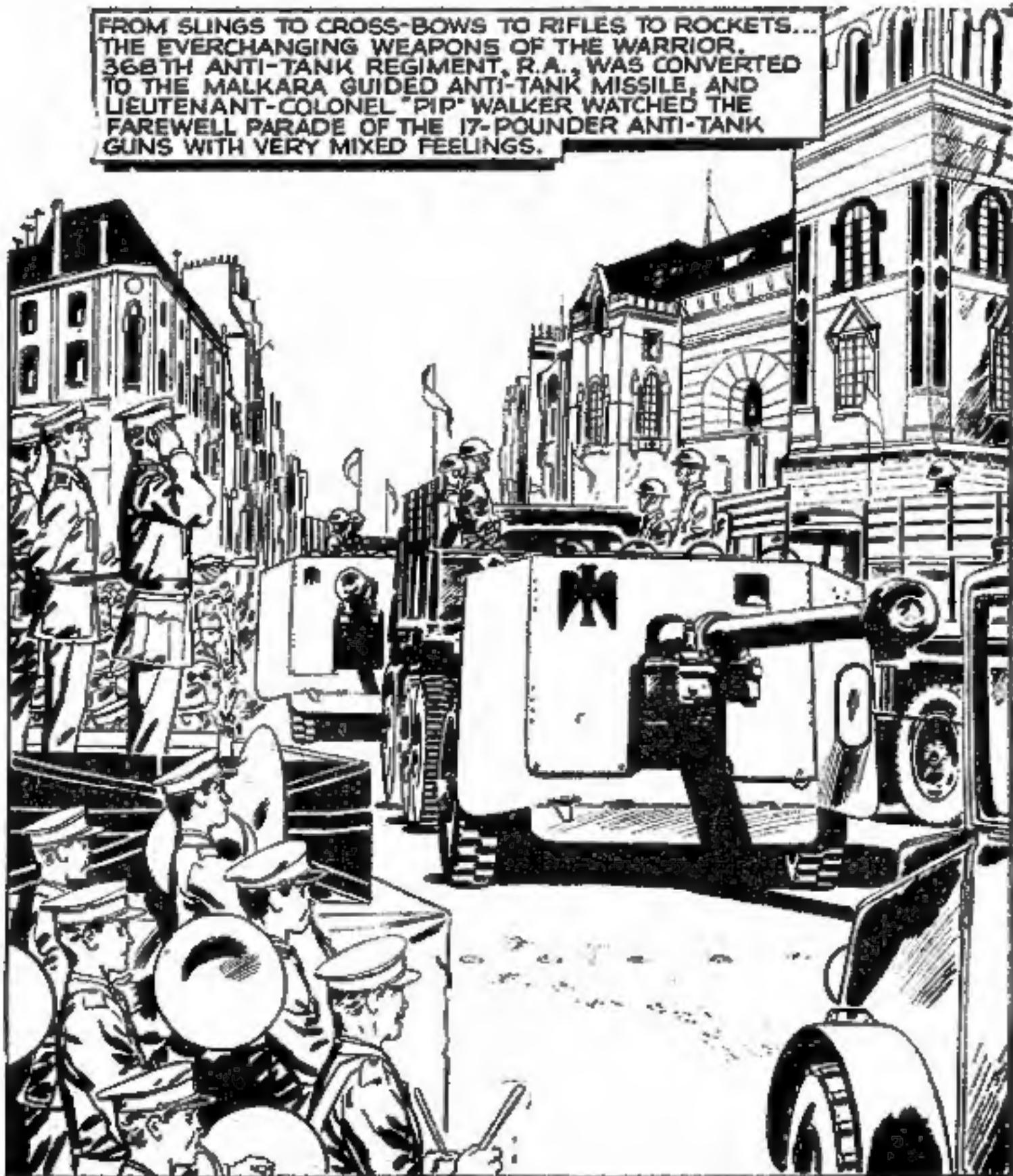
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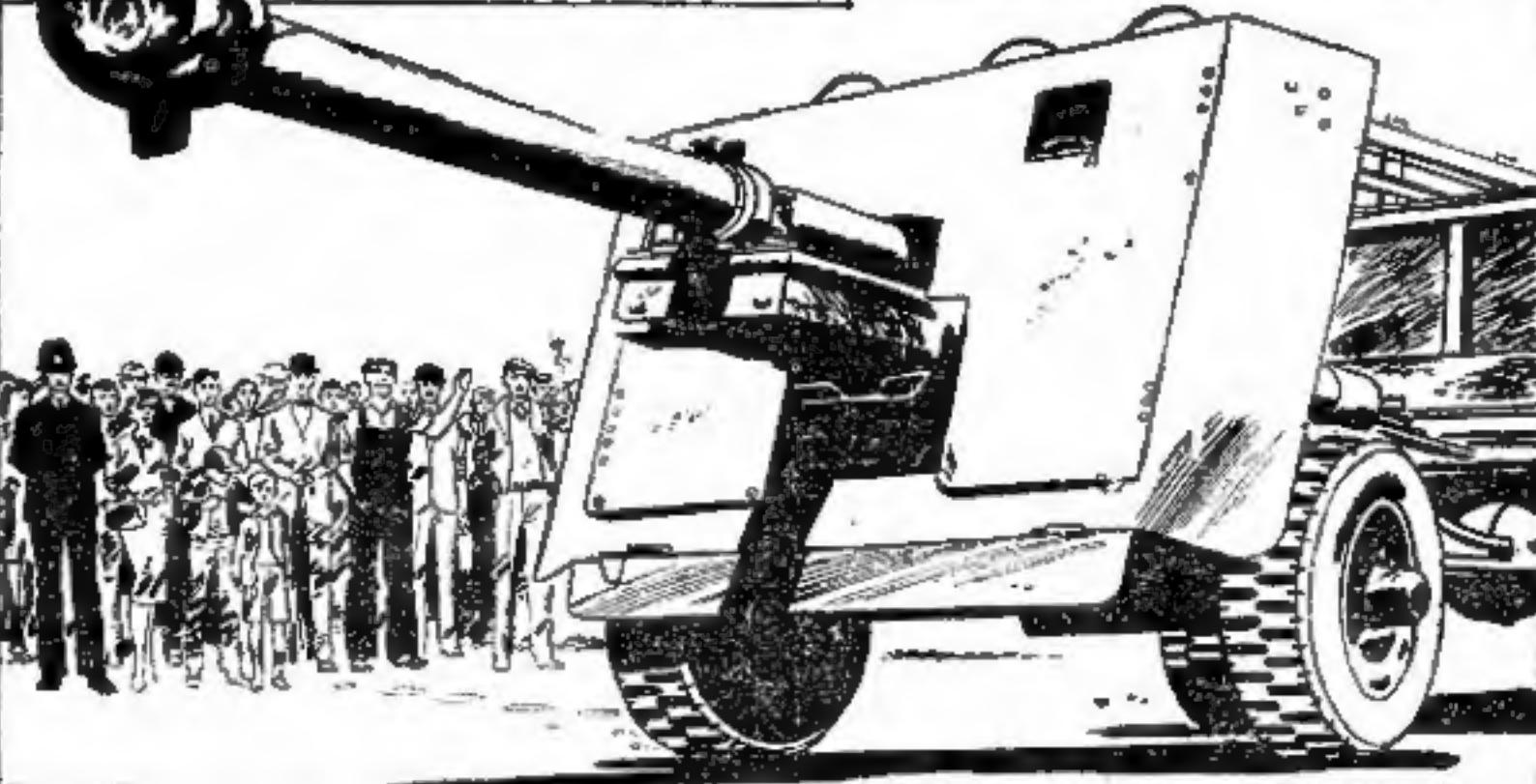
The MARK of the EAGLE

FROM SLINGS TO CROSS-BOWS TO RIFLES TO ROCKETS...
THE EVERCHANGING WEAPONS OF THE WARRIOR.
368TH ANTI-TANK REGIMENT, R.A., WAS CONVERTED
TO THE MALKARA GUIDED ANTI-TANK MISSILE, AND
LIEUTENANT-COLONEL "PIP" WALKER WATCHED THE
FAREWELL PARADE OF THE 17-POUNDER ANTI-TANK
GUNS WITH VERY MIXED FEELINGS.



Chapter 1. Farewell to Arms

SAND, MUD, DUST — THOSE GUNS HAD SEEN PLENTY OF DIRT. NOW THEY
GLEAMED AND GLISTENED IN AN ENGLISH SUN. LIKE OLD
SOLDIERS, THE VETERAN GUNS WERE STILL AS SMART AS
GUARDSMEN ON PARADE.



THREE BATTERIES, EACH OF TWO TROOPS, EACH TROOP WITH FOUR GUNS.
TWENTY FOUR GUNS IN ALL, AND ON THE GUNSHIELDS OF 'E' TROOP WAS
BLAZONED A STRANGE DEVICE — A TWO-HEADED GERMAN EAGLE ...



The Mark Of The Eagle

3

AS THE STRAINS OF 'AULD LANG SYNE' GREW FAINTER, FADING AS THE LAST GUN MUZZLES DREW AWAY, THE GENERAL SPOKE TO PIP WALKER...



THE BAND SWUNG INTO A STIRRING MARCH. ON TO THE PARADE GROUND CAME THE NEW WEAPONS - THE ROCKET-POWERED MALKARAS MOUNTED ON THEIR ARMOURED HORNETS. AND ON TO THE DAIS STEPPED ANOTHER, YOUNGER LIEUTENANT-COLONEL.



The Mark Of The Eagle

THAT NIGHT THE REGIMENT CELEBRATED. IN THE SERGEANTS' MESS, R.S.M. JOE PRICE STOOD TALKING TO THE MAN WHO WAS TAKING HIS PLACE.

IT'S BEEN A GOOD MESS, TUG. BUT IT'S CHANGING! THEY SEEM TO HAND OUT THREE STRIPES TO ANY KID!

ALL BRAINY BOYS, JOE. ELECTRONIC WIZARDS!

BUT JOE'S EYES LIT UP AS HE GLANCED AT THE DOOR.

GOOD! THERE'S PIP WALKER AND COLONEL LINDSEY. I ASKED THEM TO DROP IN FOR A DRINK.

AS THE TWO OLD FRIENDS TALKED ANIMATEDLY, LINDSEY AND THE NEW R.S.M. WATCHED THEM...



THEN, IN A MOMENT OF SILENCE, THE LAUGHING VOICE OF ONE OF THE YOUNG SERGEANTS WAS HEARD...

ONE GOOD THING, ANYWAY - 'EASY' TROOP WON'T HAVE TO PAINT THAT DAFT TWO-HEADED DUCK ON THEIR NEW PROJECTORS!

JOE PRICE WENT RED IN THE FACE. WITH A QUICK WORD OF EXCUSE TO HIS C.O., HE SWUNG ROUND, STIFF AS A RAMROD. HIS VOICE WAS AS COLD AS STEEL.

SERGEANT DIXON / ANOTHER CRACK LIKE THAT AND YOU'LL LEAVE THE MESS! UNDERSTAND?

The Mark Of The Eagle

DIXON GULPED, WENT RED IN THE FACE, AND SAT DOWN AGAIN...



"E" TROOP'S EAGLE SYMBOL HELD A SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR BOTH RIP WALKER AND JOE PRICE...



The Mark Of The Eagle

7

BUT IT WAS NOT ONLY THE SERGEANTS WHO WERE TO HEAR THE STORY. LIEUTENANT-COLONEL LINDSEY'S CURIOSITY HAD BEEN STIRRED...

I THINK I'LL STAY, PIP. I'D LIKE TO HEAR ABOUT THIS EAGLE BUSINESS...

ALL RIGHT, GENTLEMEN! FILL YOUR GLASSES AND SETTLE DOWN. TONIGHT YOU'RE GOING TO HEAR THE STORY OF "EASY" TROOP'S EAGLE...



GLAD YOU'RE STAYING, COLONEL LINDSEY, SIR. YOU SEE, THIS IS REALLY CAPTAIN... I MEAN, COLONEL PIP WALKER'S STORY...

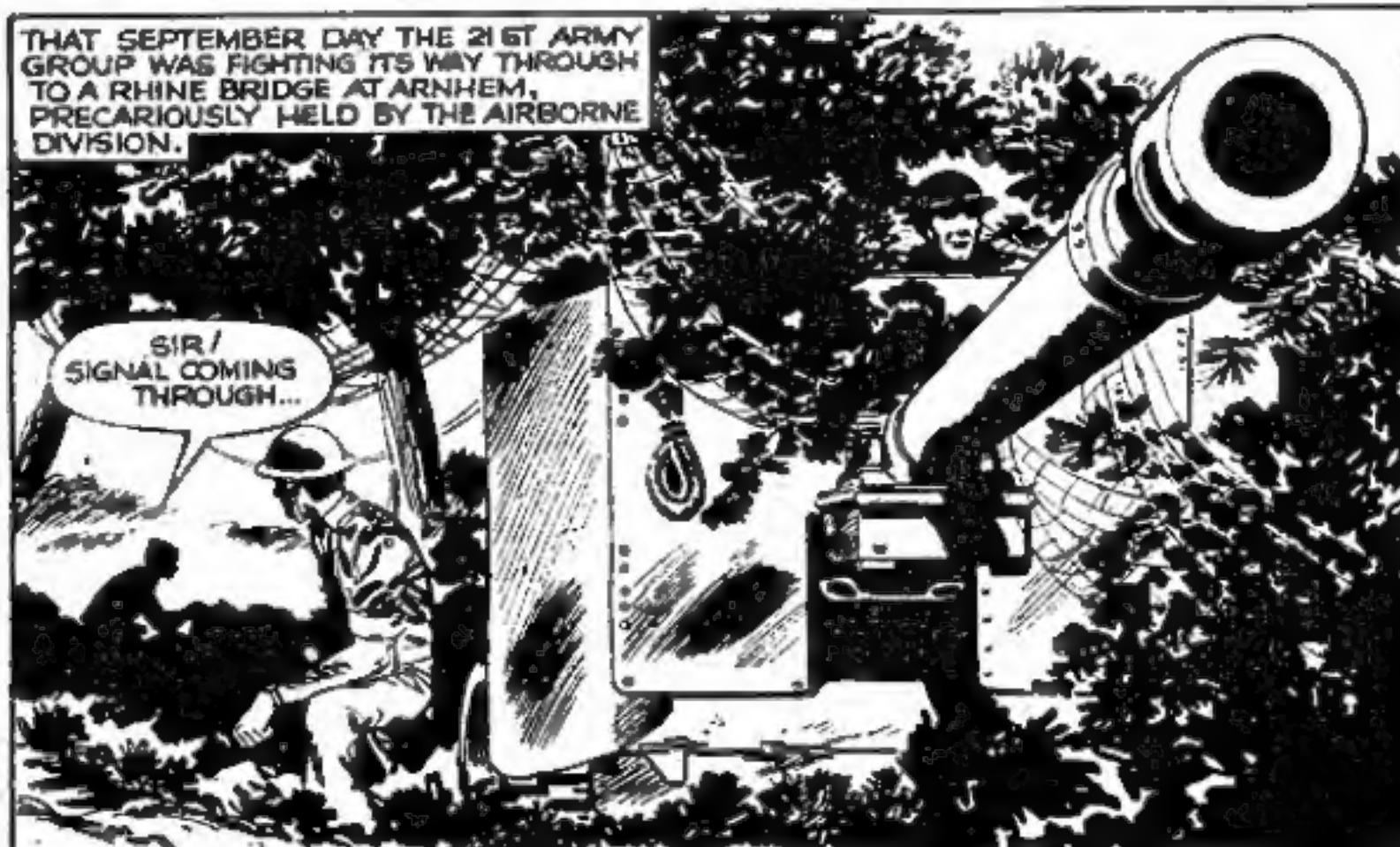


Chapter 2. Bird of Prey

IN 1944, THE COMMANDER OF 'E' TROOP WAS CAPTAIN "PIP" WALKER, THE TROOP SIGNALLER BEING BOMBARDIER JOE PRICE. FOR THEM THE WAR HAD MEANT TWO YEARS IN THE DESERT, THE SICILIAN CAMPAIGN, THE NORMANDY LANDINGS AND THE INCESSANT SLOGGING BATTLES AFTERWARDS...



THAT SEPTEMBER DAY THE 21ST ARMY GROUP WAS FIGHTING ITS WAY THROUGH TO A RHINE BRIDGE AT ARNHEM, PRECARIOUSLY HELD BY THE AIRBORNE DIVISION.



SIR!
SIGNAL COMING
THROUGH...

The MarR Of The Eagle

THEY WERE ON THE FLANK OF THE ONLY ROAD LEADING, THROUGH EINDHOVEN AND NIJMEGEN, TO THE PARATROOPS' POSITION. THE ROAD WAS UNDER HARD ENEMY PRESSURE.

"OKAY, WI CO,
BUT I MUST HAVE
MORE AMMO."



IT HAD BEEN FOUR DAYS SINCE THE ARNHEM BRIDGE HAD BEEN CAPTURED. THE ROAD WAS THE LAST LIFE-LINE TO THE MEN OF THE AIRBORNE DIVISION.

"WARN THE WAGON-LINES! THERE ARE JERRY TIGER TANKS HEADING THIS WAY."



"E" TROOP HAD NOT TANGLED WITH SUCH HEAVY GERMAN ARMOUR BEFORE. BUT PIP KNEW THAT ALL GUNS WERE WELL SITED AND THEIR COMMANDERS PREPARED FOR ACTION.

"IF ONLY EACH GUN HAD ANOTHER TEN ROUNDS ARMOUR-PIERCING!"



10 The Mark Of The Eagle

DIP WENT TO SPEAK A FINAL WORD TO SECOND-LIEUTENANT JOHN FAWLEY. A RECENT REPLACEMENT, FAWLEY WAS IN CHARGE OF NUMBER ONE GUN.



BEYOND THE CREST OF THE RISE, OUT OF SIGHT OF "EASY" TROOP'S POSITION, THREE MUGG TIGER TANKS WERE HUMBLING FORWARD, LINE ASTERN. ON EACH HULL WAS THEIR REGIMENTAL EMBLEM - A BLACK TWO-HEADED GERMAN EAGLE.



The Mark Of The Eagle

11

THE FIRST TANK CREEPT OVER THE CREST, MOVING OBLIQUELY INTO THE FIRING ARC OF NUMBER ONE GUN. A DIFFICULT TARGET, BUT YOUNG JOHN FAWLEY WAS ANXIOUS TO GET HIS FIRST TANK. HE RATTLED OUT HIS FIRE ORDERS...



QUICKLY, FAWLEY ESTIMATED THE DISTANCE THE GUN SHOULD BE AIMED AHEAD OF THE TANK TO COMPENSATE FOR ITS FORWARD MOTION

FROM H & PREPARED RANGE CARD, HE ESTIMATED THE DISTANCE OF THE TANK FROM THE TREES. AND THE TREES WERE AT 1,000 YARDS RANGE...



The Mark Of The Eagle

IT WAS A TRICKY SHOT, ONE THAT A MORE EXPERIENCED COMMANDER WOULD HAVE AVOIDED. THE FIRST ROUND WOULD HAVE TO BE A KILLER. AFTER THAT, THE ENEMY WOULD BE ALERT, THE PRESENCE AND POSITION OF THE ANTI-TANK GUNS KNOWN...



IT WAS A MISS/ THE LEADING TANK IMMEDIATELY SWUNG TO MEET THE THREAT, PRESENTING THE HEAVY ARMOUR OF ITS FRONT TO THE ATTACK. THE OTHER GUNS OPENED UP, BUT THE ADVANTAGE OF SURPRISE WAS GONE



The Mark Of The Eagle

13

THE TIGER WAS VULNERABLE ONLY BETWEEN THE BOGIES, AT THE AMMUNITION RACK OR AT THE ENGINE COMPARTMENTS. IT WAS NUMBER TWO GUN WHICH SCORED THE HIT ON THE ENGINE, BRINGING FLAMING DESTRUCTION TO THE ARMOURED MONSTER.



WARNED BY FAWLEY'S FIRST SHOT, THE OTHER TWO TANKS HAD KEPT BELOW THE CREST, NOW THEY EDGED FORWARD TO THE ATTACK. THEIR LONG GUN BARRELS BLASTING HIGH EXPLOSIVE SHELLS AT THE BRITISH GUNS



The Mark Of The Eagle

JOHN FAWLEY PAID A HIGH PENALTY FOR HIS IMPETUOUS HANDLING OF HIS FIRST ACTION. A TIGER SHELL EXPLODED IN HIS GUN PIT.



AS THE WOUNDED MEN DRAGGED THEMSELVES OUT OF THE FIRING PIT, THE THREE REMAINING GUNS FORCED THE TWO TIGERS TO WITHDRAW BEHIND THE PROTECTION OF THE CREST.



The Mark Of The Eagle

15

BOTH SIDES PAUSED. THE INITIATIVE WAS NOW WITH THE ENEMY. IF THEY CHOSE, THEY COULD MAKE IT A SHELL FOR SHELL SLOGGING MATCH.

AMMO'S GETTING SHORT. WE MUST PLAY FOR TIME - AND TRY TO GET THOSE POOR DEVILS OUT OF NUMBER ONE PIT.



THE GERMANS HAD ALWAYS RESPECTED A TRUCE FOR THE RECOVERY OF WOUNDED. PIP CALLED UP THE MEDICAL CORPORAL AND ORDERLY...

CORPORAL -
BRING THOSE TWO
MEN IN FROM NUMBER
ONE PIT. JERRY WILL
RESPECT YOUR
ARMBANDS.

RIGHT, SIR.
COME ON, LET'S
GO!



The Mark Of The Eagle

THE MEDICS HURRIED ON THEIR MERCY MISSION. THE GERMAN TANK TROOP COMMANDER MADE HIS DECISION. ONE TIGER BREASTED THE CREST. PIP WALKER HELD HIS FIRE.



WITHOUT INTERFERENCE FROM 'E' TROOP, THE TIGER TRAVERSED ITS GUN - AND FIRED AT THE SMALL GROUP IN NUMBER ONE PIT.



The Mark Of The Eagle

17

THE OUTBURST OF FIRING FROM 'EASY' TROOP CAUSED BOTH TANKS TO WITHDRAW. PIP LOOKED AT THE TANK SHATTERED IN THE EARLY STAGES OF THE BATTLE.

A BLACK EAGLE
SYMBOL! I'LL RECOGNISE
THAT REGIMENT AGAIN -
AND I WON'T FORGET
THEM!



IT WAS JOE PRICE WHO BROUGHT PIP BACK TO EARTH WITH AN URGENT MESSAGE

WARNING ORDER
FROM BATTERY H.Q.,
SIR. TROOP TO BE
PREPARED TO MOVE
AT THIRTY MINUTES'
NOTICE.

THANKS,
BOMBARDIER!



Chapter 3. Fuel for the Flames

AS ALL THE WORLD KNOWS, THE 21ST ARMY GROUP FAILED TO REACH ARNHEM AND STALEMATE DEVELOPED IN OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER. IN THE MOUNTAINOUS, WOODED AREA OF THE ARDENNES, AN AMERICAN ARMY STOOD BEFORE THE SIEGFRIED LINE. BEHIND THE FRONT, OVER TRAILS AND ROADS MATTED WITH STRAW TO MUFFLE THE NOISE, 250,000 GERMANS, 1,900 GUNS AND 970 TANKS WERE SLOWLY MOVING WEST TO THEIR ATTACK POSITIONS. THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE WAS ABOUT TO BEGIN ...



The Mark Of The Eagle

17

RAMPS WERE THROWN ACROSS THE DRAGON'S TEETH OF THE SIEGFRIED LINE, AND THE 60-TON TANKS RUMBLED OVER THEM. THE EXCITEMENT OF OLD VICTORIES WAS RISING IN THE GERMAN ARMY, ONCE MORE THEY WERE TO ATTACK!



NEXT MORNING, THE GERMANS STRUCK ALL ALONG THE FRONT A TREMENDOUS NON-STOP BARRAGE OF EIGHTY EIGHTS, MORTARS AND FOURTEEN-INCH SHELLS FROM RAILWAY GUNS, BATTERED THE AMERICAN POSITIONS



The Mark Of The Eagle

THE ENEMY STREAMED THROUGH THE ARDENNES. AT LAST, BRITISH UNITS WERE PUSHED INTO THE NORTHERN HALF OF THE BATTLEFIELD. PIP WALKER'S TROOP, AGAIN UP TO STRENGTH, DROVE UP TO THE FRONT



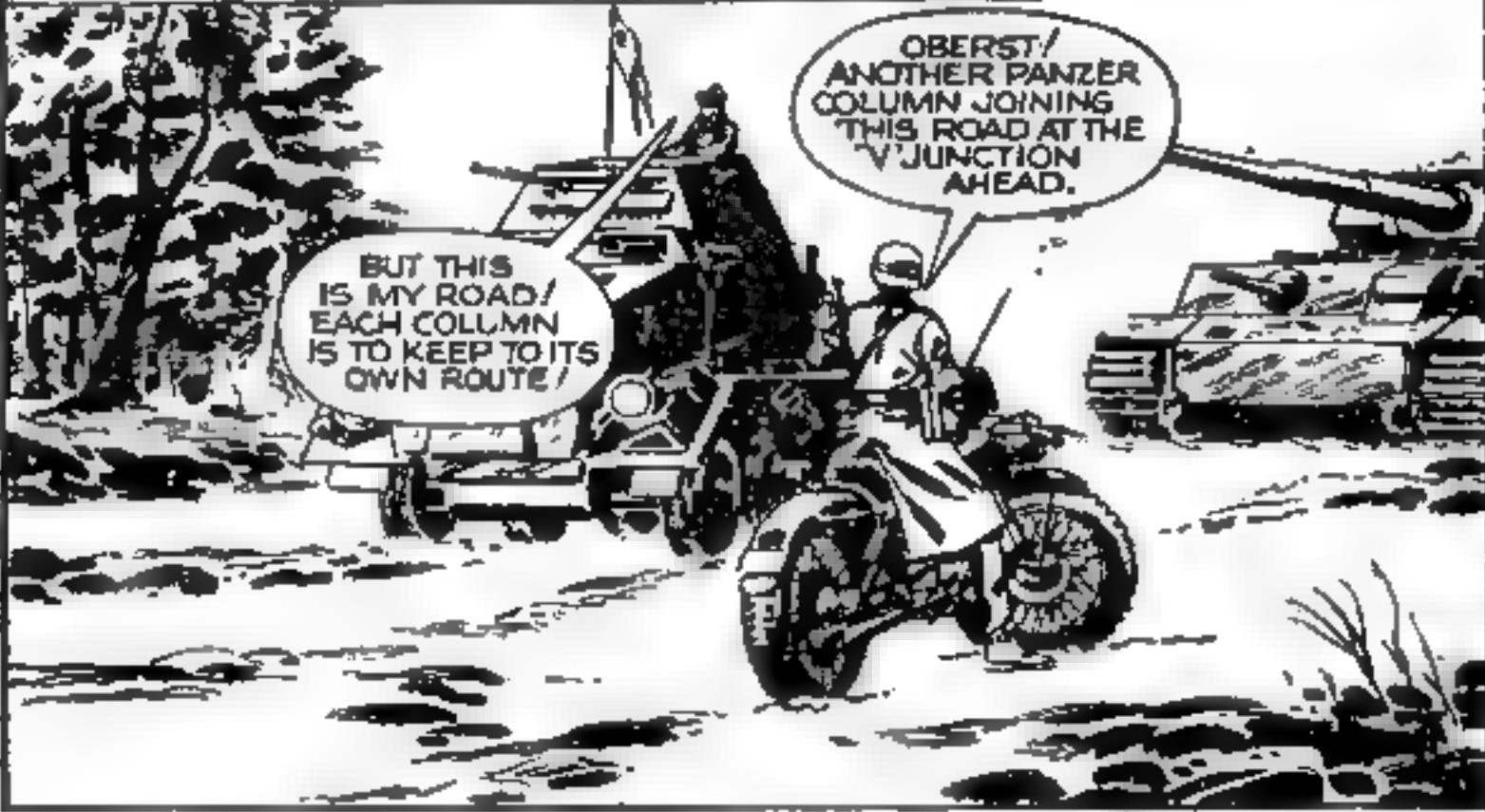
MEANWHILE, WITHIN THE GERMAN LINES, FRESH TROOPS RUSHED TO THE FRONT. OBERST VON KLING WATCHED. THIS WAS TO BE ANOTHER BLITZKRIEG, HITLER SAID. BUT THE OBERST WONDERED.



The Mark Of The Eagle

21

VON KUNG'S PANZER COLUMN OF TIGERS, EVERY VEHICLE BEARING THE BLACK DOUBLE-HEADED EAGLE OF THE HOHLZERNDORFS, THUNDERED ALONG ITS ALLOTTED ROAD WHICH LED DIRECTLY TO THE AMERICAN PETROL DUMP AT MANSLAY. VON KUNG NEEDED PETROL BADLY. THEN...



'IN HIS ARMOURED CAR HE ROARED AHEAD OF HIS TANKS, FURIOUS AT THE INEFFICIENCY OF THE RIVAL UNIT.



AS HE REACHED THE BEND IN THE ROAD, THE FIRST TANK OF THE S.S. COLUMN HAD ALREADY PULLED ON TO THE MAIN ROAD...



The Mark Of The Eagle

VON KUNG ORDERED HIS DRIVER TO BLOCK THE SECOND S.S. TANK FROM THE MAIN ROAD. FROM THE LEADING TANK LEAPT A FURIOUS YOUNG S.S. LIEUTENANT-COLONEL.



IN THE OLD DAYS THERE HAD BEEN COMRADESHIP BETWEEN THE PANZER UNITS, BUT THOSE DAYS HAD GONE. VON KUNG SPOKE COLDLY TO THE ARROGANT YOUNG OFFICER ...





VON KLING HAD EXPECTED SUCH A RETORT. THE YOUNG OFFICER, A STAUNCH NAZI, WAS SAID TO HAVE HIGH-RANKING FRIENDS IN THE GESTAPO...

ARE YOU THREATENING ME WITH YOUR CONTEMPTIBLE NAZI FRIENDS, KLEIST?



VON KLING EXPLODED! KLEIST'S INSULT TO HIS KING TIGER TANKS HAD BEEN THE ONE THING THAT HAD TOUCHED HIM ON THE RAW.

LET ME WARN YOU, KLEIST! IF ONE MORE OF YOUR TANKS MOVES ON TO MY ROAD BEFORE ALL MY TIGERS ARE PAST - I'LL BLOW YOUR TIN CANS TO PIECES!



The Mark Of The Eagle

THERE WERE TEARS OF RAGE AND HUMILIATION IN THE EYES OF THE FUMING S.S. OFFICER. BUT HE DID AS HE WAS TOLD. WITH A MAN LIKE VON KLING, ONE DID NOT TAKE CHANCES .

FORWARD, KLEIST! YOU CAN LEAD THE WAY. THEN WAIT FOR THE REST OF YOUR KAMPFGRUPPE AT THE GASOLINE DUMP.



THE PETROL DUMP AT MANSLEY WAS TEN MILES AHEAD. WHILE THE GERMANS WERE STILL MILES OFF, OTHER VISITORS HAD ARRIVED — "EASY" TROOP, LED BY CAPTAIN PIP WALKER.

HI, YOU GUYS!
YOU'RE HEADING
THE WRONG WAY WE'RE
SUPPOSED TO BE
RETREATING'



The Mark Of The Eagle

25

ONLY A SMALL REAR-PARTY OF AMERICAN ENGINEER TROOPS WAS LEFT AT THE PETROL DUMP.

IT LOOKS AS IF THIS IS AS FAR AS WE GO. WE'RE SUPPOSED TO HELP PROTECT THIS DUMP.

PROTECT IT! SOME CHANCE, BUDDY! THAT KRAUT ARMOUR'LL EAT YOU FOR BREAKFAST!



THE AMERICAN OFFICER WAS RIGHT, ONE ANTI-TANK TROOP STOOD LITTLE CHANCE AGAINST AN ENEMY ARMOURED UNIT DESPERATE FOR THE PETROL...

WE'RE GOING TO BLOW THIS LOT SKY-HIGH. YOU GUYS BACK-TRACK BEFORE YOU GET YOUR GUNS SCORCHED!

PITY. I'D LIKE TO CHALK UP A TARGET AFTER COMING ALL THIS WAY



SAY, YOU'RE RIGHT! I HAD A PLAN TO CATCH ME A KRAUT TANK, BUT IT NEEDED TANK DESTROYER SUPPORT. NOW, BY JIMINEY, YOU'VE BROUGHT JUST THAT!



The Mark Of The Eagle

QUICKLY THEY DISCUSSED HIS PLAN. THEN, WHILE PIP DEPLOYED HIS GUNS TO COVER THE APPROACH ROAD FROM THE EAST, THE AMERICANS PILED THEIR TRUCK WITH FIVE GALLON CANS OF PETROL...



THE DUMP WAS ON HIGH GROUND. TOWARDS THE GERMAN LINES, THE ROAD DROPPED STEEPLY. THE ENGINEERS BEGAN TO PLANT THEIR CANS.



THE 'E' TROOP GUNS WERE HIDDEN, SCREENED BY TREE BRANCHES ALREADY THE POWERFUL ROAR OF TANK MOTORS COULD BE HEARD AS THE MONSTERS CUMBED THE HILL.



MEANWHILE, AMONG THE STACKED PETROL CANS, AN AMERICAN ENGINEER HAD PLACED A SINGLE STICK OF GELIGNITE ON A SHORT TIME-FUSE..



AS THE FIRST TANK REACHED THE TOP OF THE HILL, ITS MOTORS RUNNING HOT WITH THE EFFORT OF THE LONG CLIMB, THE EXPLOSIVE CHARGE BLEW UP IN THE STACKED PETROL CANS. A TORRENT OF ROARING FLAME POURED DOWN ON THE S.S. TANK. THE ARMoured BOX BECAME A SEARING OVEN!



The Mark Of The Eagle

29

IN A MOMENT OF SUDDEN PITY, PIP CLOSED HIS EYES.
WAR WAS ALWAYS FRIGHTFUL - BUT NOT ALWAYS AS
FRIGHTFUL AS THIS! HIS GUNS ROARED, TO ADD TO THE
INFERNO.



ONLY THE AMERICAN ENGINEER,
HALF-CRAZY WITH EXHAUSTION,
GLOATED AT THE SUCCESS OF
HIS PLAN.

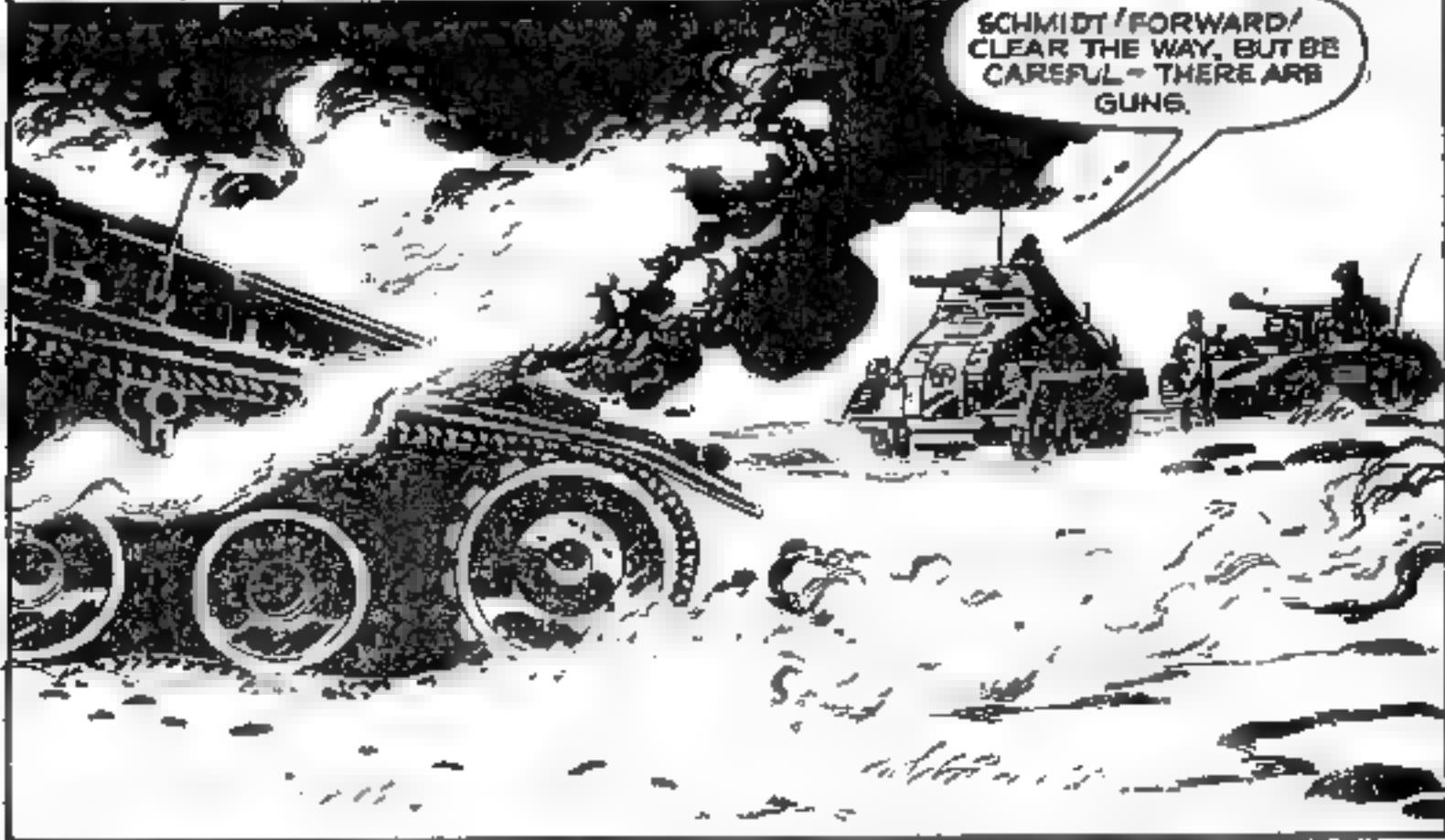


The Mark Of The Eagle

KLEIST, THE MAN WHO HAD TRESPASSED ON VON KLING'S ROAD, PERISHED IN THE INFERNO. FARTHER BACK, VON KLING HALTED HIS UNIT, THEN CALLED UP HIS LEADING TANK.

WADDETT 3
1

SCHMIDT / FORWARD! CLEAR THE WAY, BUT BE CAREFUL - THERE ARE GUNS.



PIP WALKER, WATCHING THE APPROACH OF VON KLING'S FIRST TANK, SAW THE SYMBOL ON THE TURRET.

D GRJEF!
THE DOUBLE-HEADED EAGLE! IT'S THAT MURDERING MOB AGAIN!



IN THE TROOP H.Q. TRUCK, JOE PRICE TRIED VAINLY TO RAISE THE BATTERY COMMANDER.

ROVER FIVE
CALLING ROVER.
O.K. COME IN
ROVER ONE-



FROM THEIR CONCEALED POSITIONS, ALL FOUR GUNS OF THE TROOP FUNNELLED THEIR FIRE ON TO THE TIGER AS IT BREASTED THE CREST OF THE HILL.

KEEP HIM BUSY,
YOU LIMEYS! WE'VE
GOT TO HAVE TIME TO
BLOW THE GASOLINE
UP!



PIP HAD ALMOST FORGOTTEN THE PETROL DUMP. IT WOULD HAVE TO BE DESTROYED. BUT COULD "EASY" TROOP HOLD OFF THE ATTACK FOR LONG ENOUGH?

MOVE FAST,
YANK. BUT GIVE
ME TIME TO GET
MY BOYS OUT
BEFORE YOU
LIGHT THE
MATCH!

SURE
THING!



The Mark Of The Eagle

VON KLING WAS IN TROUBLE. HIS LEADING TANK, HIT REPEATEDLY, WAS ALREADY A CASUALTY. AND FROM THEIR POSITION ON THE STEEP HILL, THE OTHER TANKS COULD NOT BRING EFFECTIVE FIRE TO BEAR.



OBERST!
I HAVE TUNED
INTO THE ENGLANDERS'
WAVELENGTH...

LISTENING IN ON THE OPPOSING WIRELESS NET WAS A FAVOURITE TRICK OF THE GERMANS.
VON KLING LISTENED TO JOE'S EFFORTS TO RAISE BATTERY H.Q. /



ROVER FIVE
CALLING ROVER
ONE - ROVER FIVE
CALLING ROVER
ONE.

A MINOR DEADLOCK HAD DEVELOPED. TWO TANKS WERE OUT OF ACTION, BUT 'E' TROOP COULD NOT GET THEIR SIGHTS ON THE OTHERS UNTIL THEY CAME OVER THE HILL, AND THE TANKS COULD NOT HIT BACK FROM THEIR PRESENT POSITION ...



SUDDENLY, AS JOE TURNED THE KNOBS OF HIS RADIO, HE HEARD A VOICE ...



IT WAS VON KLING, HE WAS TRYING TO PARLEY



The Mark Of The Eagle

MAKING TERMS WITH GERMANS WAS NOT IN PIP'S BOOK. YET HE WOULD HAVE TO PULL BACK SHORTLY...



THE OBERST GRUNTED. HE REMEMBERED THE INCIDENT, BUT HE COULD NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR EVERY TRIGGER-HAPPY GUNNER IN HIS UNIT. IT HAD BEEN SAD - BUT UNAVOIDABLE...

FOR THAT, THERE WAS NO EXCUSE. THE GUNNER WAS TOO EAGER, NOT FULLY TRAINED. I AM SORRY, NOW - DO YOU RETREAT?



The Mark Of The Eagle

35

WITH THE AMERICAN ENGINEER OFFICER GIVING THE WARNING THAT THE DUMP WAS READY FOR DEMOLITION, PIP ACCEPTED THE TERMS. IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO TRAP MORE TANKS IN FLAMING DESTRUCTION! HE ORDERED HIS GUNS OUT



WITH PIP WALKER'S ASSURANCE THAT HIS GUNS HAD PULLED OUT, VON KLING LED HIS TIGERS TOWARDS THE PETROL. FROM A SAFE DISTANCE, PIP WATCHED THEM COMING. SOON THE AMERICAN WOULD TURN THE DUMP INTO A FLAMING INFERNO, TRAPPING GERMAN TANKS AND THEIR CREWS.



The Mark Of The Eagle

SUDDENLY PIP FELT A STRONG SENSE OF GUILT. HE HAD ACCEPTED GENEROUS TERMS PROPOSED BY THE GERMAN COMMANDER, AND HAD TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THEM. NOW HE WAS PLANNING THE WHOLESALE SLAUGHTER OF THE UNSUSPECTING GERMAN TANKMEN. PIP RUSHED TO THE WIRELESS SET.



AT PIP WALKER'S WARNING, VON KLING HALTED HIS COLUMN DEAD. THREE MINUTES LATER, WITH A SULLEN ROAR, THE DUMP EXPLODED INTO A MASS OF RAGING FLAMES



Chapter 4. Honourable Truce

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE PETROL MEANT THAT THE GERMAN TANK SQUADRON WOULD HAVE TO HALT UNTIL MORE FUEL COULD BE BROUGHT UP FROM THE REAR IN TRUCKS. THE DELAY ENABLED "E" TROOP TO GET MANY MILES AWAY.



THE VILLAGE OF DEUX PONTS HAD HELD AN AMERICAN BRIGADE H.Q. AND HAD BEEN AN EARLY TARGET IN THE ARDENNES OFFENSIVE. NOW IT WAS JUST A JUMBLE OF GAUNT, ROOFLESS HOUSES.



381 The Mark Of The Eagle

BY THE TIME VON KUNG'S SQUADRON HAD RE-FUELLED AND COVERED THE MILES TO DEUX PONTS, 'E' TROOP WAS IN A STRONG POSITION, READY AND WAITING.



INDIVIDUAL
GUNFIRE AT YOUR
OWN DISCRETION
DON'T FORGET - THE
FIRST ROUND IS THE
VITAL ROUND -

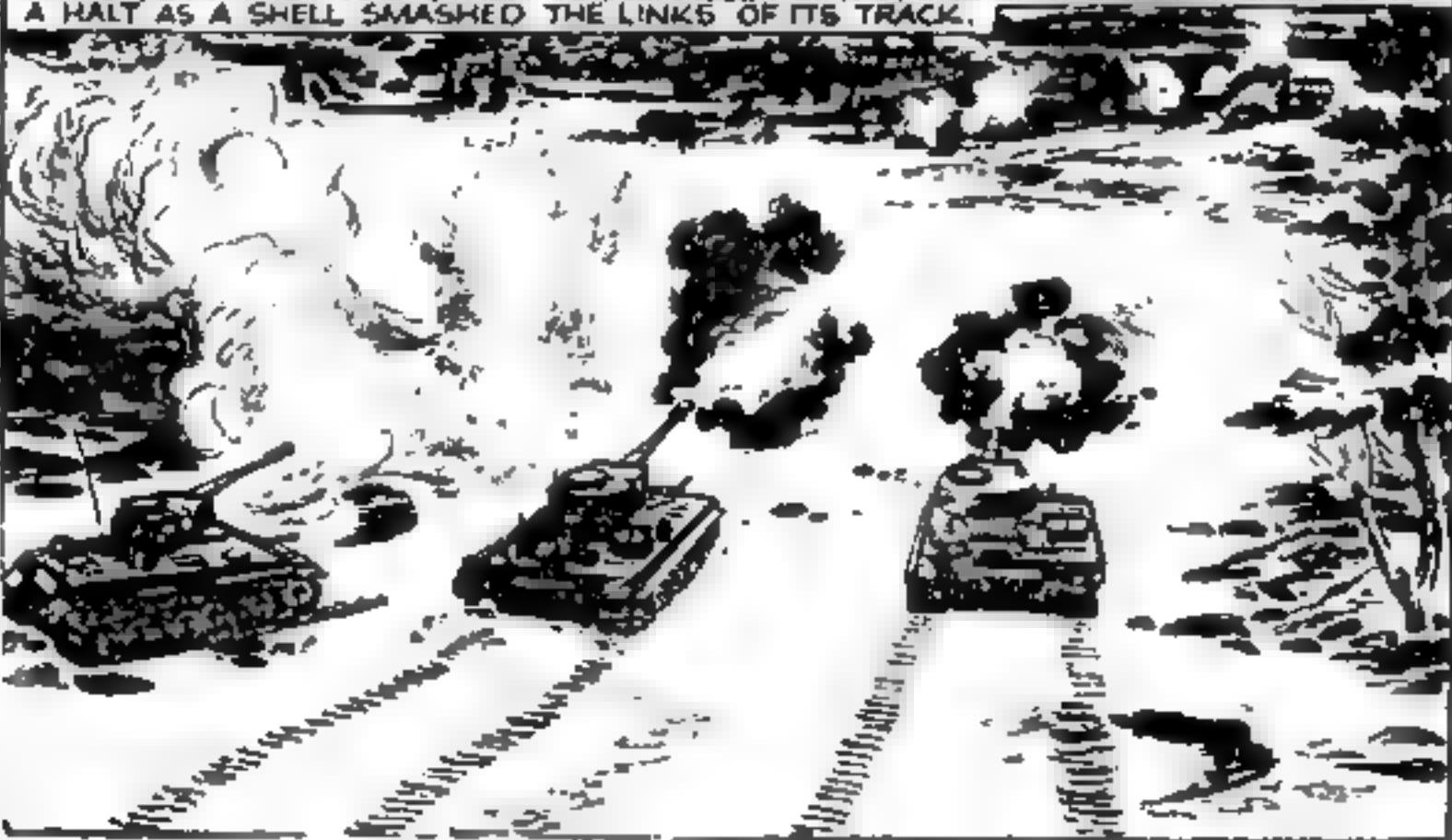
THE FIRST TIGER TANK CAME OUT OF THE WOODED ROAD, BRINGING DEUX PONTS INTO VIEW. ON VON KUNG'S ORDER TWO TANKS DREW LEVEL WITH THE LEADER, TO PRESENT A FORMIDABLE FRONTAGE TO ANY ATTACK.



COOLLY, THE DETACHMENT COMMANDERS WAITED UNTIL THE TANKS WERE IN THEIR SIGHTS THEN ...



THE STEEL-HARD ARMOUR OF THE TANK FRONTS RESISTED EVEN ARMOUR-PIERCING SHELLS, BUT THEY HAD OTHER VULNERABLE POINTS. ONE OF THE TANKS GROUND TO A HALT AS A SHELL SMASHED THE LINKS OF ITS TRACK.



The Mark Of The Eagle

TWO OF THE TIGERS MOVED FORWARD, AN INCREASING MENACE TO THE BRITISH GUNNERS.



ONCE AGAIN A SEVENTEEN-POUNDER SHELL SMASHED THE TRACK FROM A TANK; IT SLEWED ROUND, REVEALING ITS THINNER ARMoured SIDE-PLATES. THE BRITISH SHELLS STRUCK HARD AT THE WEAKNESS.



The Mark Of The Eagle

61

THE MASSACRE OF THE PIAUAI TANKS BY ARMY WAS BEGUN TO
THERE IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THE JAPANESE OVERRAN THE
PORT AND KILLED ALL THE TROOPS.



DOING WHAT THEY COULD DO BUT IN THE END, THE BOMBING RAINED DOWN AT THE
PORT OF PIAUAI.



The Mark Of The Eagle

WHEN THE DUST AND SMOKE CLEARED AWAY, THE EXTENT OF THE DESTRUCTION COULD BE SEEN THREE BREWED-UP TANKS AND A BURNING HOUSE.



PHEW!
THAT MUST HAVE
SHAKEN THE JERRIES.
BUT THERE'S STILL
A LOT OF TIGERS
LEFT

AS THE FIRES BURNED, THE GUNFIRE DIED DOWN. IN THE SKY, BEYOND THE RANGE OF THE FLICKERING FIRES, DARKNESS HAD NEARLY FALLEN. PIP SENT BACK TO HIS WAGON LINES FOR THE TOWING VEHICLES.



THIS IS
OUR CHANCE
TO PULL
OUT.

The Mark Of The Eagle

43

MORE THAN A MILE AWAY, VON KLING WAS AGAIN PREPARING TO ATTACK IN DEVASTATING FORCE...



ALL PANZER
COMMANDERS / THE
ENGLISH GUNS MUST
BE SILENCED. THE
SQUADRON WILL
ADVANCE...

IN THE EXCITEMENT OF BATTLE, NEITHER SAW THAT THERE WAS A STIR OF LIFE IN THE BLAZING HOUSE.



MARIE!
WHERE ARE YOU?
THE HEAT IS
TERRIBLE!

PAUL
AM HERE

The Mark Of The Eagle

IN DEUX POINTS IT HAD BEEN KNOWN AS THE HOUSE OF THE BLIND . A SANCTUARY FOR AGEING BLIND FOLK, SUPPORTED BY A BENEVOLENT CHARITY A PLACE OF REST OVERTAKEN BY THE TERRORS OF WAR .

PAUL!
THEY WILL
KILL US, PAUL,
I'M SO
FRIGHTENED!

COME MARIE
HERE WE CANNOT
STAY, OUR HOME
IS ON FIRE



DURING THE GERMANS' EARLIER BOMBARDMENT, THE BLIND PATIENTS HAD BEEN LED INTO THE CELLARS FOR SHELTER, WHILE THE NURSES HAD GONE FOR HELP NEVER TO RETURN. NOW THEY WERE BEING SMOKED OUT OF THEIR SANCTUARY TO WANDER HELPLESSLY ACROSS A BATTLEFIELD WHERE SHELLS WHINED OVERHEAD.



WORKING FAST, "E" TROOP WAS PULLING OUT THEY COULD HEAR THE DISTANT RUMBLE OF THE NAZI TANKS. SOON THEY WOULD REACH THE VILLAGE.



AS HE PEERED THROUGH THE NIGHT IN THE DIRECTION OF THE GERMAN TANKS, P.P. WALKER SAW THE VAGUE FORMS OF THE BLIND REFUGEES.

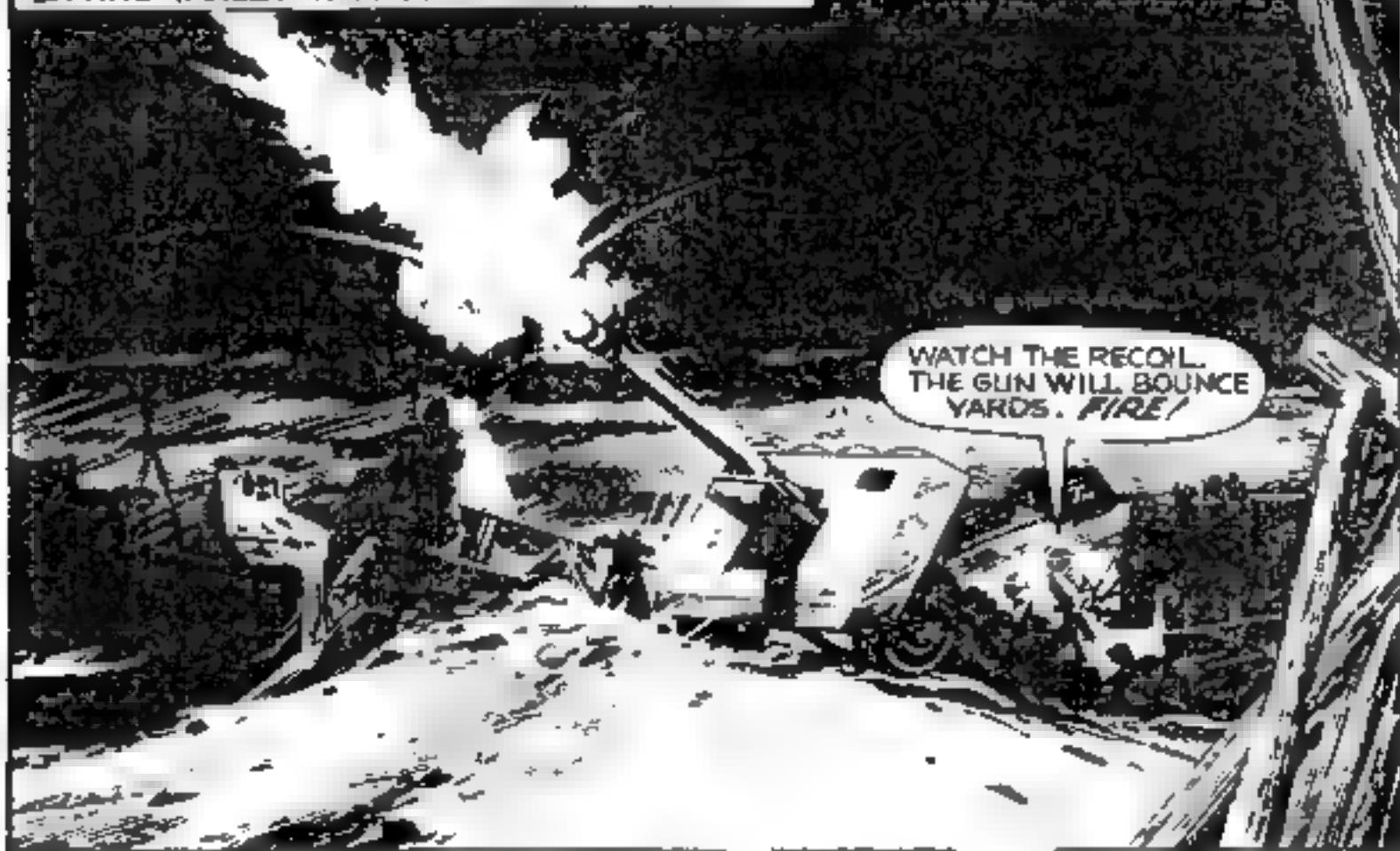


HE HAD TO GAMBLE ON THE GERMAN COMMANDER'S HUMANITY. IF THE ENEMY COULD NOT SEE THE OLD PEOPLE, THEIR DANGER WAS ACUTE. IF THEY COULD SEE THEM, THEY MIGHT STILL FIRE. BUT P.P. WAS PREPARED TO TAKE THAT CHANCE.



The Mark Of The Eagle

THE STAR SHELL WOULD SPOTLIGHT THEM AND THEIR VEHICLES MAKE THEM A SITTING TARGET IT WAS A GAMBLE ALL ROUND!



THE STAR SHELL BURST OVERHEAD, ILLUMINATING THE WHOLE SCENE VIVIDLY FROM BEHIND HIS TANKS, VON KLING SAW THE HELPLESS BUND AND 'E' TROOP - OUT OF ACTION!

HERR OBERST!
THE GUNS ARE PERFECT
TARGETS! GIVE THE
ORDER TO FIRE AND
WE WILL ELIMINATE
THEM!



The Mark Of The Eagle

47

VON KLING'S FIRST THOUGHT WAS THAT IN HIS POSITION, KLEIST WOULD NOT HAVE HESITATED. BUT KLEIST HAD BEEN AN S.S. MAN AND A RABID NAZI. THE HOHLZERNDOFF EAGLE STOOD FOR SOMETHING MORE HONOURABLE.

DO NOT FIRE.
THE ENGLISH ARE ON
AN ERRAND OF MERCY.
OUR ENGLISH CAPTAIN
WALKER IS A
REMARKABLE MAN!



UNIMPEDED BY THE GERMANS, PIP PACKED THE BLIND REFUGEES INTO THE TRUCKS, AND PULLED OUT. FARTHER BACK, 'E' TROOP WAS TO MAKE ANOTHER STAND.

STONE THE CROWS!
I THOUGHT THE SKIPPER
HAD BOUGHT IT THAT TIME!
I RECKON THAT GERMAN
COMMANDER'S A BIT OF
A SPORTSMAN, EH,
MATE?



Chapter 5. The Last Stand

THAT WAS THE LAST THEY EXPECTED TO SEE OF THE EAGLE PANZERS. THE TROOP REJOINED THE REGIMENT AND TOOK PART IN THE MAJOR DRIVE INTO GERMANY. NEAR LUBECK, THEY WERE SITED TO COVER A ROAD JUNCTION



IT WAS THE STRANGEST TANK THEY HAD EVER SEEN. THERE HAD BEEN NOTHING LIKE IT IN THE R TANK RECOGNITION PAMPHLETS.



The Mark Of The Eagle

49

CURIOUSLY, THEY WATCHED ITS STEADY, SLOW APPROACH.

SHALL I SEND
A FEW MEN OUT
TO HAVE A LOOK
AT IT, SIR?

YES,
BUT WARN 'EM
TO BE CAREFUL!

SUDDENLY, JOE PRICE HURRIED ACROSS TO HIS TROOP COMMANDER

MESSAGE
FROM H.Q.,
SIR!

WHAT'S THIS?
ALL TROOPS WARNED
BEWARE OF NEW ENEMY
WEAPON BEETLE! SMALL
TANK, REMOTE
CONTROLLED, PACKED
WITH EXPLOSIVE.
GOOD GRIEF! THAT'S
WHAT THIS MUST BE!

The Mark Of The Eagle

PIP'S MEN WERE HEADING TO SUDDEN DEATH. THE BEETLE TANK WAS A TRACKED, MOBILE MINE...



THE TROOP COMMANDER HURLED HIMSELF AT THE SMALL GROUP OF MEN, BUNDLING THEM INTO A DITCH AT THE SIDE OF THE ROAD.



NEXT SECOND, THE BEETLE EXPLODED WITH A DEAFENING BLAST.



The Mark Of The Eagle

51

THE MEN OF "EASY" TROOP PICKED THEMSELVES UP, UNHURT, BUT GRUMBLING BITTERLY.



FOR A WEEK THEY HELD THE POSITION, DEFYING THE GERMAN ATTEMPTS TO BLOCK THE CROSS-ROADS. AT LAST A STRANGE CONVOY CAME ROLLING ALONG...



The Mark Of The Eagle

THE MOTLEY BUNCH WAS A PARTY OF RELEASED BRITISH PRISONERS-OF-WAR FINDING THEIR WAY HOME? PIP QUESTIONED THEM...



EXCITEDLY, PIP WALKED OVER TO THE RADIO.



The Mark Of The Eagle

53

PIP FOUND IT WAS TRUE/ THE ACTUAL SURRENDER WOULD NOT BE SIGNED UNTIL THE FOLLOWING DAY. BUT THE NEWS HAD SPREAD FAST ALONG THE FIGHTING FRONT. EVERYBODY WAS TIRED OF WAR...



FOR THE HARD-PRESSED MEN OF E TROOP, IT MADE A PLEASANT CHANGE TO BE ABLE TO RELAX



The Mark Of The Eagle

OF ALL THE CELEBRATING TROOP, ONLY JOE WAS STICKING TO HIS JOB. SUDDENLY A MESSAGE CAME THROUGH FROM BATTERY HEADQUARTERS...



ORDER TO MOVE COULD MEAN ONE OF TWO THINGS / EITHER THEY WERE TO JOIN THE TRIUMPHANT MARCH TO BERLIN - OR THEY WERE BEING WITHDRAWN ...



HAPPILY, "E" TROOP CAME OUT OF ACTION...



The Mark Of The Eagle

55

IN RECORD TIME THEY WERE READY TO ROLL. WHEN THE MESSENGER DROVE IN WITH THE MOVEMENT ORDER, THERE WAS NO HAPPIER BUNCH OF VETERANS IN NORTH-WEST EUROPE!

HERE IT COMES!
MY GUESS IS BRUSSELS.
THEY SAY IT'S THE
BRIGHTEST SPOT IN
THE WESTERN
WORLD!



DELIGHTEDLY, THEY WATCHED AS PIP READ THE ORDER. BUT THEIR COMMANDER LOOKED GRIM AS HE TURNED TO THE SERGEANT...

SERGEANT—
CALL A MUSTER
PARADE. I WANT
TO TALK TO
THE MEN.

YES, SIR!



The Mark Of The Eagle

THE MEN COULD FEEL THE CHANGE OF MOOD EVEN BEFORE HE SPOKE TO THEM. JOE PRICE KNEW INSTINCTIVELY THAT FATE HAD PLAYED ANOTHER TRICK ON THEM...



NOT ALL THE MEN TOOK IT AS RESIGNEDLY AS JOE PRICE



The Mark Of The Eagle

57

PIP WALKER WAS AS STUNNED AS ANY OF HIS MEN. HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY "EASY" TROOP HAD BEEN PICKED FOR A JOB FIFTY MILES AWAY. BUT LIKE IT OR NOT, IT WAS AN ORDER!

PIPE DOWN! I'M JUST AS FED UP AS THE REST OF YOU, BUT THIS TROOP'S GOT A FINE RECORD— AND I'M NOT GOING TO SPOIL IT NOW BY A STUPID MUTINY.



IT WAS A MOROSE, DEJECTED TROOP THAT FINALLY GOT ON THE ROAD. NO MAN'S HEART WAS IN FIGHTING NOW. THE WAR WAS SUPPOSED TO BE OVER!

OKAY,
LET'S ROLL!



The Mark Of The Eagle

THE RENDEZVOUS WAS ON A FLAT PLAIN NEAR A WOODED COPSE. AN IRATE BRIGADIER MET THEM



THE BRIGADIER WAS AN ANGRY MAN. THIS WAS HIS BRIGADE SECTOR AND HE HAD BEEN ORDERED BY THE GENERAL TO ACCEPT ANOTHER BRIGADIER'S ANTI-TANK TROOP TO HELP HIM OUT!

IT'S NOT MY IDEA/
I'D HAVE SENT MY TANKS
IN - BUT THE DIVISIONAL
COMMANDER WON'T HAVE
IT. INSIDE THAT WOOD IS
A SQUADRON OF TIGER
TANKS WHO REFUSE
TO SURRENDER!



THEY WON'T SURRENDER,
I TELL YOU! I'LL TEACH
THEM A LESSON! GET THOSE
GUNS INTO ACTION—AND
BLAST 'EM OUT!

VERY
GOOD,
SIR!



THERE WAS NO SNAP AND SMARTNESS
IN THE GUN DRILL, NO GLOSSY SHINE ON
THE GUNS .. SIX YEARS OF WAR HAD BEEN
TOO LONG FOR MEN AND WEAPONS...

THEY'RE A SLOVENLY
LOT, WALKER. IF I'D HAD
THEM IN MY BRIGADE
FOR A FEW MONTHS
I'D HAVE —

YOU'D HAVE
WHAT?



The Mark Of The Eagle

PIP ROUNDED ON THE SENIOR OFFICER, UNABLE TO CONTROL HIS ANGER...



AS PIP SWUNG AWAY TO BRIEF HIS DETACHMENT COMMANDERS HE HEARD THE
BRIGADIER BLUSTERING BEHIND HIM...



THE GERMAN HAD ASKED FOR HIM BY NAME? PUZZLED - PIP WALKED ON.
THINKING HARD...



PIP FELT HE HAD TO SORT THIS THING OUT HIMSELF. THERE COULD BE ONLY ONE GERMAN WHO MIGHT KNOW HIM.. AND HE HAD COMMANDED TIGER TANKS. HE IGNORED THE BR GADIER'S SHOUT



The Mark Of The Eagle

AS HE WALKED THROUGH THE WOOD, HE SAW THE SMALL ARMS TRAINED ON HIM - AND BEHIND THEM THE MUZZLE OF A LONG-BARRELED EIGHT-EIGHT TANK GUN. ON THE TURRET WAS THE BLACK EAGLE OF HOHLZERNDORF.



IT WAS VON KLING WHO CAME OUT TO MEET HIM. THE GERMAN LOOKED TIRED AND WORN, BUT HE STILL CARRIED HIMSELF WITH DIGNITY.



The Mark Of The Eagle

63

PIP FELT PROUD. THIS WAS THE BIGGEST COMPLIMENT THAT COULD HAVE BEEN PAID TO HIS TROOP... THAT A FIGHTING MAN LIKE VON KLING SHOULD SO RESPECT IT...

I SHALL BE
HONOURED TO ACCEPT
YOUR SURRENDER, HERR
OBERST. SHALL WE GO?
THE WAR IS OVER - FOR
BOTH OF US.

VON KLING RETURNED TO GIVE HIS ORDERS.
HE BROUGHT BACK THE EAGLE PENNANT
FROM HIS ARMOURED CAR...

ONCE I WOULD HAVE
SURRENDERED MY SWORD.
INSTEAD I SURRENDER
THIS PENNANT. THE
HOHLZERNDOFF EAGLE
IS A TROPHY OF HONOUR,
I ASSURE YOU.



The Mark Of The Eagle

IT WAS THE END OF JOE PRICE'S STORY...

SO THAT'S
THE STORY OF THE
TWO-HEADED EAGLE.
IT'S SOMETHING WORTH
REMEMBERING, AND
REMEMBER WE DID,
UP TO NOW. BUT SOON
IT'LL ALL BE FORGOTTEN!



AS LIEUTENANT-COLONEL LINDSEY WALKED BACK TO THE OFFICERS' MESS,
HE STOPPED TO LOOK AT THE MALKARA MISSILES. HE WAS JOINED BY
LIEUTENANT-COLONEL PIP WALKER...

ADMIRING
YOUR NEW
TOYS?

NOT EXACTLY, PIP.
I'M LOOKING FOR THE
BEST PLACE TO PAINT THE
BLACK EAGLE ON THEM.
EASY TROOP WILL
REMEMBER...



... AND SO THEY DID... FOR THAT IS THE TRADITION OF THE BRITISH ARMY!

ALSO ON SALE NOW

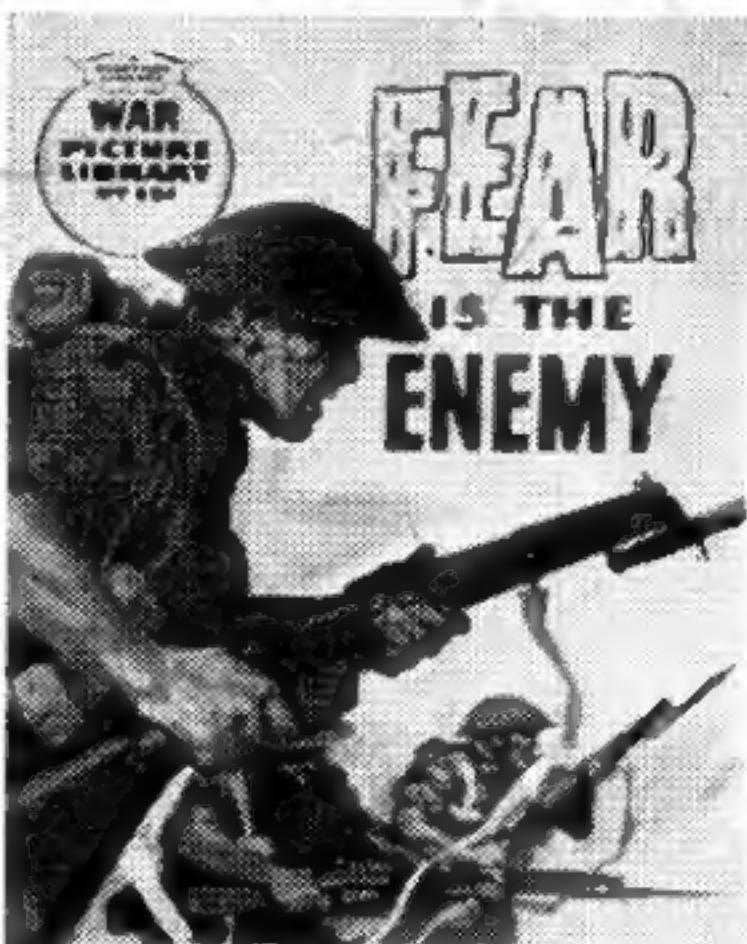
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